

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

The purpose of this letter is to encourage your support for commuter benefits for employees utilizing public transportation. Mass transit reduces carbon emissions caused by single occupancy vehicles, decreases our dependence on foreign oil, alleviates traffic congestion and strain on our highway infrastructure, and improves the quality of life for commuters.

A provision in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) extended the transportation benefit provided to employees using public transportation to \$230 per month. This benefit was an increase from the \$120 per month benefit allowed prior to February 17, 2009. The current \$230 benefit will remain in effect until December 31, 2010. It is imperative that we do not allow this benefit to sunset at the end of this year.

The State of Maryland is in a unique situation as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), with an expected increase of approximately 60,000 direct and indirect jobs by September 15, 2011. In order to accommodate this increase in personnel, the State and local municipalities are challenged with providing necessary infrastructure improvements. This presents an opportunity to encourage employees from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. to use mass transit as their primary method of travel. In order to make mass transit, such as van pools, commuter busses, and metro and MARC shuttles available, this \$230 per month allowance is imperative.

It is important for Congress to support mass transit not only in Maryland, but across the nation. Providing this incentive encourages commuters to get out of their cars and into public transportation. The Commuter Benefits Equity Act of 2009 is currently being considered by Congress (S.322 and H.R.891, respectively). We ask that you show your support for these pieces of legislation by acting swiftly to ensure passage.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



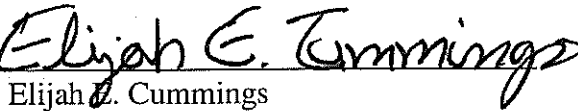
Barbara A. Mikulski
U.S. Senator



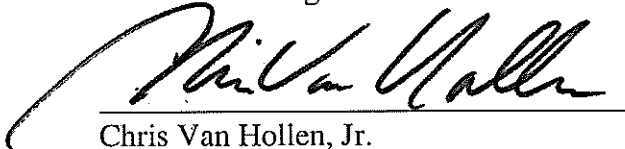
Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



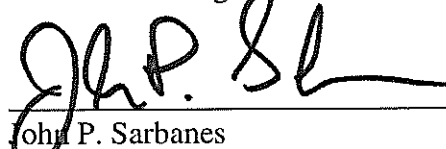
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



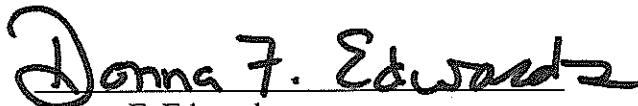
Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen, Jr.
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

C: Dr. Robert M. Gates, Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense
The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor, State of Maryland
Senator Max Baucus, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance
Congressman Charles Rangel, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means
Congressman Edolphus Towns, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform